



Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council

3 Dowling Street, Launceston, Tasmania 7250
Ph: (03) 6334 5381
E: admin@theac.org.au W: www.theac.org.au
ABN 24 541 552 357

20 April 2016

Dear Tasmanian home educators,

Most of you are, by now, well aware of the changes presented in the *Draft Education Bill, 2016*. Many home educators have attended information sessions and made submissions. As home educators, we continue to be a community that is passionate and engaged in our children's education as well as the education of all children in Tasmania.

THEAC realises that there has been some consternation in the home education community regarding the lack of a public response from THEAC. Many factors have impacted on this, not least being that all the members of THEAC are volunteers with busy lives outside of THEAC. It has only been in the past week that the Council as a whole has been able to meet to have a formal briefing, to enable THEAC to make a response.

THEAC is also aware that there are concerns among home educators about some of the proposed changes. Whilst THEAC didn't initiate these changes, we recognise that much of the structural change is necessary.

The continued increase in numbers home educating in Tasmania means that it is not sustainable to manage the review of programmes on a volunteer basis. THEAC has given much time and consideration to solving this issue and has sought a variety of external advice. It is increasingly evident that putting more financial resources into the current system is not a solution. Reform of the *status quo* is essential if we as a community wish to retain THEAC as an Advisory Council.

THEAC has and will continue to work closely with those drafting the legislation to ensure that the privileges home educators currently enjoy are retained. THEAC understands the Minister has no intention to limit educational styles, or impose a particular curriculum, or introduce mandatory testing.

Confirmed changes include annual instead of bi-annual monitoring and the establishment of a statutory body independent of the Department of Education, to administer the registration process. The Registrar of this statutory body will take up the administrative functions of THEAC and much of the day-to-day work currently being carried unsustainably by THEAC's Chair.

In the new system, THEAC will continue. THEAC retains its current functions as an Advisory Council and its current oversight of each and every home education registration. With some of the current administrative load lifted, THEAC hopes to have more time to work on other areas such as policy, support and advocacy.

A further change is the move to all Registration (formerly Monitoring) Officers having, alongside home education experience, formal education qualifications. THEAC has spent much of its time since the release of the *Draft Education Bill, 2016* working on what this means for current staff and how best to support them into the future.

THEAC currently has a set of standards against which each new application and ongoing registration is assessed. These standards are being improved in conjunction with members of the home education community and will form a part of the regulations that will accompany the new *Education Act*. Once THEAC has finished a draft of these standards, they will be sent to all home educators for feedback. THEAC has been assured that any re-creation of standards in the future will involve THEAC and the home education community.

Many of the other provisions in the proposed legislation (e.g. temporary and conditional registration) already exist under the current system.

The *Draft Education Bill 2016*, Explanatory Paper and other useful information can be found at the link below:

<http://tased-education-act.blogspot.com.au/2014/09/review-of-tasmanian-education-act.html>

Legislators are also encouraging feedback via a survey at the following link:

<https://www.research.net/r/draftededucationbill2016>

THEAC will continue to work with those drafting the legislation over the coming period as we represent the concerns and hopes of the Tasmanian home education community and its future.

Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council